

The Second Fort, 1853

From the Journal of Andrew Fjeld

In the summer of 1853, a couple of white men while passing an Indian encampment near Springville, saw an Indian beating his squaw in a very brutal manner. This was just a little more than one of these men could stand so he interfered much to his later regret. In the struggle that ensued he accidentally killed the Indian when he was attacked very savagely by the squaw who he was trying to befriend.

This incident led to the uprising of the Indians in what was known as the Walker War which lasted for a few years and caused a lot of trouble and some bloodshed before it was finally put down.

At that time the inhabitants on the present site of Lehi were living mostly on the creek but scattered from the present State Hiway to the present Bridge Road and on springs along the present Lake Road, right down to the lake. When the war broke out orders were issued by Governor Brigham Young directing all of the inhabitants in the various settlements to immediately gather together in groups and build forts as a protection against the Indians.

Where to build the fort became now the burning question and on the advice of a committee appointed for the purpose, it was decided to make the center of the fort about where the First Ward meeting house now stands. It was decided to build a fort about 75 rods square by placing the log houses of the settlers end to end around this square. This was finally accomplished but not without some trouble. When a man objected to move the rest of the men simply ganged up on him and he had to come into line.

The approximate location of the lines of this second fort are as follows: The north line was three rods north of Main Street; the west line was three rods west of Third West Street (about on the line between Mr. Peet's home and the old George

Murdock home); the south line one half block south of Elden Comer's home; and the east line was in the center of the line of blocks between Center Street and First West Street (just east of the New West School Building on Main Street).

The first school house which had occupied a spot of ground just west of the Lehi Cereal Mill and was built of logs was torn down and rebuilt west of the present site of the Telephone Office which placed it in the north east corner of the fort. For the next three years this house was not only used for a school house but it was also used as a chapel for religious gatherings, for a municipal building in which the City Council met and Court held sway and it was also the Social Center in which dancing parties and theatrical performances were held.

Facing the houses on the inside of the fort were the corrals, pens, stack-yards, etc., where the cows, horses, pigs and chickens were kept. In the center of the fort was a large open yard for loose stock and horses. In the middle of this yard was a cedar post set firmly in the ground which was used for a snubbing post. This post remained standing for many years after the yard was done away with and was looked upon as an interesting landmark of the past.

The names of the most of the families which lived on the four sides of the fort are as follows:

East side- George Zimmerman, John Zimmerman, John Spires, Tunis Rappleye, Martin Bushman, John Brown, and William Goates.

North side- Thomas Ashton, Alfred Bell, William Hudson, William Sharp, William Dopson, Able Evans, Daniel Collet, William Burgess, Phillip Olmstead, Prime Coleman, George Coleman, William Coleman, David Evans, Israel Evans, Joel W. White, Jehial McConnel, Henry Norton, John W. Norton, J. Whiley Norton, Riley Judd and David Norton.

West side- John Mercer, Abraham Brown, Joseph J. Smith, Preston Thomas, Canute Peterson, David Clark, Samuel R. Smith, Samuel Briggs, Charles Partridge,

Luke Titcomb, William Snow, Samuel James, Samuel Harwood, Daniel S. Thomas, John Andreason, Daniel Cox, and Oley Ellingson.

South side- Orrice Murdock, John Murdock, John R. Murdock, Abram Hatch, Mrs. Pamela Lott, John S. Lott, Ira J. Willis, W.S.S. Willes, Abraham Losee, Mrs. Lydia Losee, Joseph Skeens, Thomas Karren, Alonzo D. Rhodes, John Winn, and Silas P. Barnes.

About sixty families and perhaps three hundred souls was the population of this log-cabin enclosed fort. This fort was not a very formidable barrier against the Indians but its construction brought the people together into a group which of itself was a great protection and an advantage in many other ways. It also paved the way for a larger and more substantial fort which was built some time later.